

OP-Ed “Blog” for WisPolitics.com
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Abraham Lincoln has been quoted as having said, “I do not think much of a man who is not wiser today than he was yesterday.” Such plainspoken honesty is hard to find today. Yet, we’d venture that most agree with Lincoln. There is much to be said about what most of us have yet to learn. Even more could be said regarding what we can learn from others...if only we will.

When we travel to Bavaria with thirty leaders from various sectors of the business community and environmental groups, we will have the opportunity to learn about practices, which will help Wisconsin become stronger economically while maintaining our healthy communities and environmental excellence.

The initial Environmental Pact of Bavaria was signed in 1995 and was renewed in 2000. Under the pact, the Bavarian government and the business community of Bavaria joined forces to accomplish the goals of ecological protection and economic progress. Wisconsin first began looking at the Bavarian pact during the Thompson administration. Last legislative session, the Republican led legislature passed and Governor Doyle signed into law the Green Tier Bill, modeled after the Bavarian pact.

During our five-day mission to Bavaria, we will be able to see firsthand the successes of the Bavarian pact. We will have the opportunity to talk with those who led the way toward achieving sustainable ecological development in an economically meaningful manner. We’ll see and hear what worked in Bavaria, what didn’t work and what changes have been made in the process.

Certainly we recognize that Wisconsin is not Bavaria. What works there will have limitations here. Conversely, what would work here would have to be modified to work there. Even the names are different. Still, it doesn’t matter whether it is the Environmental Pact of Bavaria or Green Tier; it is good government. More importantly, it is a good partnership between business and government. The Bavarians have nine years of successful history under this partnership. It is logical that rather than attempting to rewrite the entire manuscript; we should take a page from their book and fine tune it to fit Wisconsin.

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